

Extract from the minutes of the meeting of University Teaching Committee held on Thursday 7 February 2019

(Full minutes available at <https://www.york.ac.uk/about/organisation/governance/sub-committees/teaching-committee/#tab-4>)

M18-19/81 Annual Programme Review

The Committee **considered** a University-level summary report and a report from each faculty on the outcomes from Annual Programme Reviews for 2017/18 (UTC.18-19/60a-d). Members were thanked for having supported the process by attending their departments' APR meetings.

Themes identified in the University summary report were considered by the Committee:

- *Issues associated with combined and interdisciplinary programmes.*
The Committee noted that challenges associated with the delivery of combined courses had been tackled last year through governance changes and that, in most cases, departments had reported that the challenges were being managed.
- *Student number growth and the impact of this on the student experience.*
The Committee noted that the Dean of the Faculty of Science was Chairing a Working Group which was considering unplanned student growth and the process for decision-making during the confirmation, clearing and adjustment period.
- *Concerns relating to workload and managing change.*
The report recommended that the issue was discussed by Heads of Department at Faculty Executive Groups (FEG), where workload models could be shared to identify effective practice. It was noted that the Associate Deans attend FEG and therefore it was **agreed** that this recommendation be taken forward by the Associate Deans through discussion with the respective Faculty Dean. It was noted that workload models related to research as well as learning and teaching; it was therefore appropriate for the Faculty Deans to decide if a discussion at FEG would be helpful.

Action: Associate Deans (TLS)

- *Concerns about student engagement and attendance.*
Departments who had noted concerns about poor attendance would be encouraged to explore the reasons for this, in the first instance, with their contact in the Programme Design and Learning Technology Team. The Committee also noted that an Attendance Monitoring project to support the Attendance Monitoring Policy (approved by Senate in July 2017) had recently been approved for initiation by the Enterprise Systems Strategy Group.
- *Challenges associated with electronic marking.*
The Committee noted that several departments had commented on this and that the Digital Learning Resources Co-ordinator (ASO) was working with the respective departments to understand the specific issues and to provide guidance to help address them. As discussed earlier in the meeting (M18-19/77 refers) the Committee noted that a Digital Assessment and Feedback

project had recently been approved by ESSG, the scope of which was to improve the digital infrastructure around assessment and feedback.

- *Successful initiatives to support careers and employability.*

The Committee was pleased to note the successful initiatives in this area and that the Faculty Employability Managers had engaged with the APR process and had produced a summary of key findings for consideration by the Employability Operations Group.

Similar themes had been identified in the faculty-level summary reports. The Associate Dean for Arts and Humanities noted that innovation in relation to assessment and feedback and embedding employability were prominent themes in reports and significant effort was being made in the Faculty to encourage student engagement and strengthen the student voice. Workload and staff welfare had emerged as concerns. Increasing postgraduate populations against falling undergraduate numbers were adding to workload pressures but the Faculty acknowledged that PGT numbers was core to sustainability.

Increasing students' sense of community had emerged as a theme in Science reports and good practice was identified in connection with employability initiatives. Concerns had been raised about the impact of high student numbers, particularly unplanned numbers. The need for data in relation to how IPC students were performing was also emphasised, given concerns raised by Chemistry and Biology about the readiness of IPC students for their programmes.

The Acting Associate Dean for Social Sciences noted that the reports had uncovered a number of examples of good practice in relation to student support. Student number growth was the primary concern in the Faculty. Student engagement and attendance had been identified as another concern and it was thought that cohort size might have an impact on this. The Associate Dean observed that there increased institutional insight with respect to effective processes and structures to support the delivery of programmes to large cohorts would be beneficial. The Associate Dean suggested that a strategic project considering the way in which the University delivers programmes to large cohorts, to include the establishment of 'norms' and advice for departments, might be useful.

The Committee **agreed** that (i) the proposal for a strategic project to consider how the University delivers programmes to large cohorts and (ii) the four major themes (combined/interdisciplinary provision, student number growth, workload/managing change, student engagement/attendance) identified in the University-level summary report, should be explored further at the March meeting between the PVC, Associate PVC, Associate Deans, Head of ASO and Faculty Learning Enhancement Project Managers.

Action: PVC (TLS) / Head of ASO

Members **considered** recommendations in the University-level summary report regarding the APR process.

The Committee **agreed** that:

- the deadline for 2018/19 departmental-level APR reports be Wednesday 13 November 2019;
- notwithstanding minor revisions to signpost staff to the Tableau Workbooks (currently in development by BIU), the APR report templates and guidance be unchanged;

- a review of Institutional reporting processes (including, but not limited to, APR) which focused on the enhancement of the student experience be conducted during Spring /Summer 2019;

Action: ASO

- a final decision about the 2019 APR process would be informed by early input from the review and be taken at the May UTC.

Members noted that the role of the UTC contact at the departmental APR meeting was less clear now that reports were reviewed by FLTG members rather than being reviewed directly by UTC. It was **agreed** that the review of reporting processes should include consideration of the role of the UTC contact.